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## Reagan Administration Won't Increase Pressure in Campaign Against Gadhafi

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WASHINGTON—Although Libya's Col. Moammar Gadhafi is reeling from his worst military defeat yet, the Reagan administration isn't trying to turn up the heat in its six-year-old campaign to destabilize the Libyan leader.

Senior U.S. officials say that the Central Intelligence Agency continues to promote opposition to Col. Gadhafi, and they still threaten to retaliate against Libya, as they did with last April's bombing. If Col. Gadhafi is caught directing another terrorist attack against Americans.

But, surprisingly, top officials aren't gloating about Libya's stinging military defeat in Chad, forecasting Col. Gadhafi's downfall, or predicting a new wave of Libyan-sponsored terrorism.

### Gadhafi's Worst Enemy

The decision not to kick Col. Gadhafi while he's down reflects a mounting conviction in Washington that the Libyan leader is his own worst enemy, and that trying to increase U.S. and European pressure on him would backfire by providing him a convenient excuse for his country's growing troubles.

"Anything we tried to do now would only distract attention from what Gadhafi's done to himself," said one high-ranking U.S. official.

But the new low-key approach to Col. Gadhafi also reflects the administration's embarrassment at charges that it tried to kill Col. Gadhafi during last April's air raid on Libya, and that U.S. officials lied to the press as part of a campaign of psychological warfare against the Libyan



Moammar Gadhafi

leader. To some extent, it also may reflect changes in the staff of the National Security Council, where more-cautious professionals have taken over the administration's policies toward Libya and terrorism in general.

### Chad Inflicts Damage

U.S. officials admit that Chad, Libya's poor North African neighbor, has inflicted far more damage on Col. Gadhafi than the U.S. ever did.

"When we spent two minutes over Tripoli, it was the superpower beating up on the Third World Arab country," said one U.S. official. "With Chad, it's been one Third World Arab country driving out Libyan invaders who had tons of Soviet weapons."

Chadian forces have pushed some 14,000 Libyan troops backward for three months, inflicted an estimated 3,000 casualties, and captured weapons valued at between \$500 million and \$1 billion, according to U.S. and West European officials. Using obsolete Redeye antiaircraft missiles, the Chadians have forced Libyan bombers to fly at such high altitudes that they have become ineffective.

### Libyan Discontent

Senior U.S. officials say discontent in the Libyan military is rising, the country's oil revenue has dropped to one-third of what it once was, and Col. Gadhafi's grip on power is weaker than ever. But the officials aren't predicting the Libyan leader is going to fall. They say the Libyan opposition is weak, divided, and poorly led. Moreover, said a senior State Department official: "This cat has a lot of lives, and I think it's more than nine."

U.S. officials are soft-pedaling evidence that Col. Gadhafi hasn't lost his enthusiasm for terrorism. Intelligence sources say Libyan agents have stepped up surveillance of French embassies and other potential French and U.S. targets, especially in West Africa—perhaps preparing to retaliate for the military aid, intelligence, and tactical advice France and the U.S. have been providing Chad.

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